

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

December 6, 2012

Dear Speaker Boehner:

We are writing to inform you that we will oppose including Social Security cuts for future or current beneficiaries in any deficit reduction package.

Under long-standing federal law, Social Security is not part of the federal budget and cannot contribute to the federal deficit. This reflects Social Security's structure as an independent, self-financed insurance program, in which worker contributions, not general taxes, finance benefits. In our view, it is essential that Social Security's status as a separate entity be fully maintained.

Contrary to some claims, Social Security is not the cause of our nation's deficit problem. Not only does the program operate independently, but it is prohibited from borrowing. Social Security must pay all benefits from its own trust fund. If there are insufficient funds to pay out full benefits, benefits are automatically reduced to the level supported by the program's own revenues. Social Security cannot drive up the deficit by tapping general revenues to pay benefits. Additionally, it is important to note that over its lifetime, Social Security has collected and earned \$15.5 trillion and only paid out \$12.9 trillion in benefits.

Even though Social Security operates in a fiscally responsible manner, some still advocate deep benefit cuts and seem convinced that Social Security hands out lavish welfare checks. But Social Security is not welfare. Seniors earned their benefits by working hard and paying into the system. Meanwhile, the average monthly Social Security benefit for seniors is only about \$1,200, quite low by international standards.

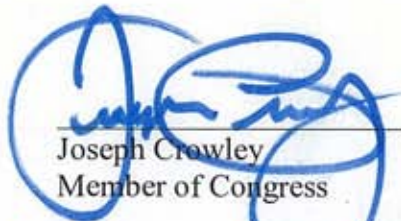
For all these reasons, we believe it would be a serious mistake to cut Social Security benefits for current or future beneficiaries as part of a deficit reduction package. To be sure, Social Security has its own long-term challenges that will need to be addressed in the decades ahead. But the budget and Social Security are separate and should be considered separately.

Thank you for your consideration of our views.

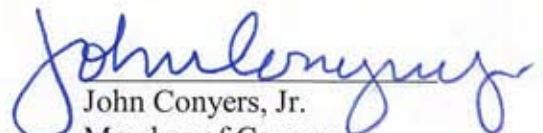
Sincerely,



Keith Ellison
Member of Congress



Joseph Crowley
Member of Congress



John Conyers, Jr.
Member of Congress



Joe Courtney
Member of Congress



Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress



Gary L. Ackerman
Member of Congress



André Carson
Member of Congress



Joe Baca
Member of Congress



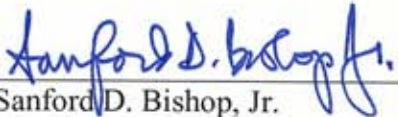
Kathy Castor
Member of Congress



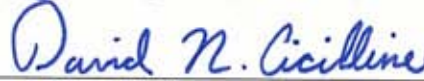
Shelley Berkley
Member of Congress



Judy Chu
Member of Congress



Sanford D. Bishop, Jr.
Member of Congress



David N. Cicilline
Member of Congress



Earl Blumenauer
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Hansen Clarke
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Robert A. Brady
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Yvette D. Clarke
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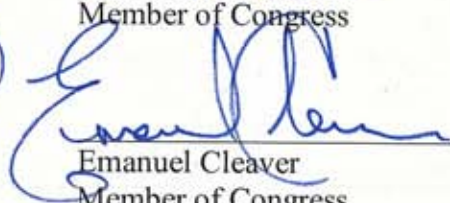
Corrine Brown
Member of Congress



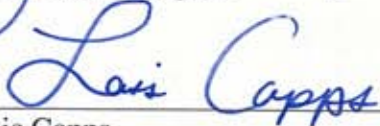
William Lacy Clay
Member of Congress



G.K. Butterfield
Member of Congress



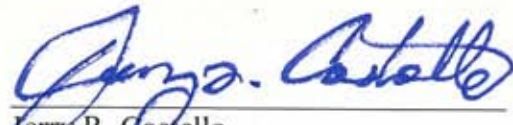
Emanuel Cleaver
Member of Congress



Lois Capps
Member of Congress



Steve Cohen
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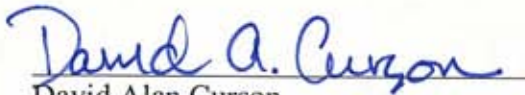
Jerry R. Costello
Member of Congress



Mark S. Critz
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Elijah E. Cummings
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David Alan Curson
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Danny K. Davis
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Peter A. DeFazio
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Rosa L. DeLauro
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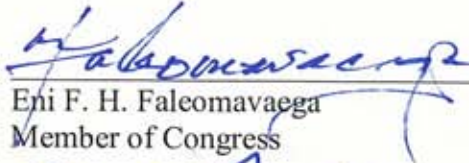
Theodore E. Deutch
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Donna F. Edwards
Member of Congress



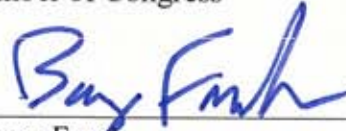
Anna G. Eshoo
Member of Congress



Eni F. H. Faleomavaega
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Chaka Fattah
Member of Congress



Barney Frank
Member of Congress



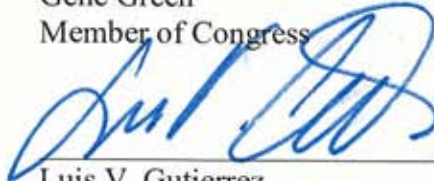
Marcia L. Fudge
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John Garamendi
Member of Congress



Gene Green
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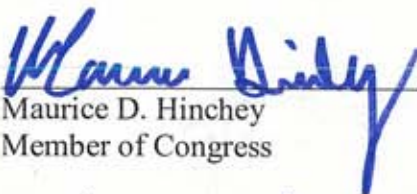


Luis V. Gutierrez
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Colleen W. Hanabusa
Member of Congress

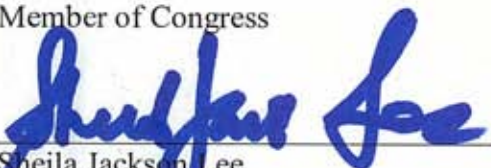

Alcee L. Hastings
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Maurice D. Hinchey
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Rubén Hinojosa
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Rush Holt
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Michael M. Honda
Member of Congress


Sheila Jackson Lee
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Henry C. "Hank" Johnson
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Marcy Kaptur
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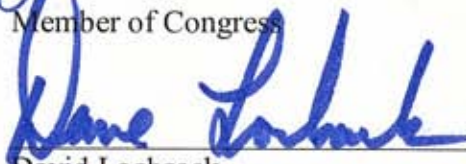

Dennis J. Kucinich
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John B. Larson
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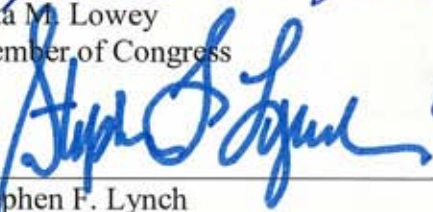

Barbara Lee
Member of Congress

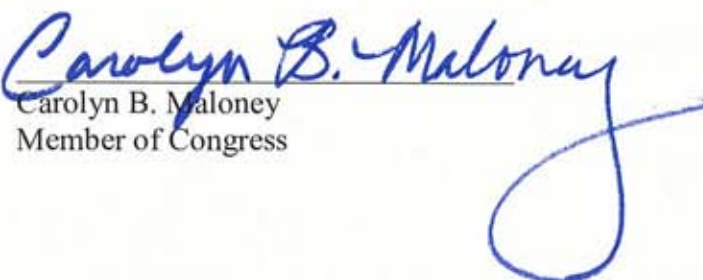

John Lewis
Member of Congress

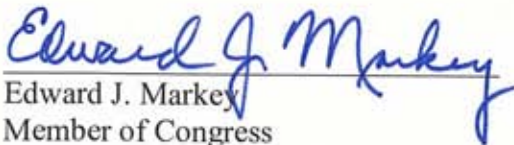

David Loebsack
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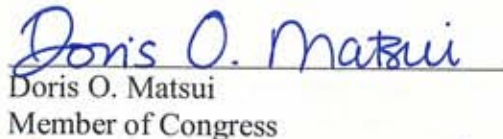

Zoe Lofgren
Member of Congress


Nita M. Lowey
Member of Congress


Stephen F. Lynch
Member of Congress

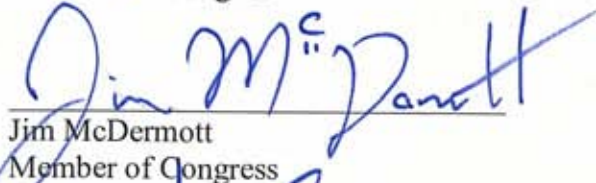

Carolyn B. Maloney
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Edward J. Markey
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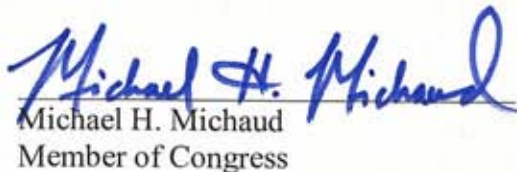

Doris O. Matsui
Member of Congress


Carolyn McCarthy
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Betty McCollum
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Jim McDermott
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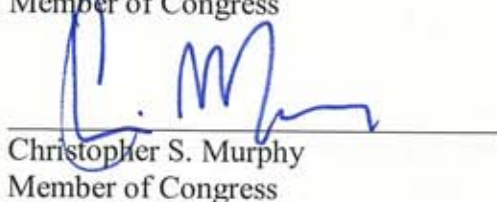

James P. McGovern
Member of Congress


Michael H. Michaud
Member of Congress


George Miller
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Gwen Moore
Member of Congress


James P. Moran
Member of Congress

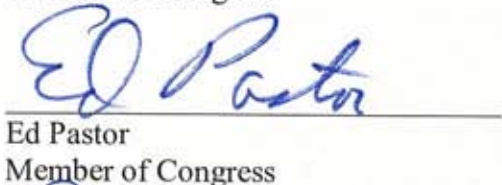

Christopher S. Murphy
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Ferrol Nadler
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Grace F. Napolitano
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John W. Olver
Member of Congress


William L. Owens
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Ed Pastor
Member of Congress


Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress


Nick J. Rahall, II
Member of Congress


Charles B. Rangel
Member of Congress


Laura Richardson
Member of Congress



Cedric L. Richmond
Member of Congress

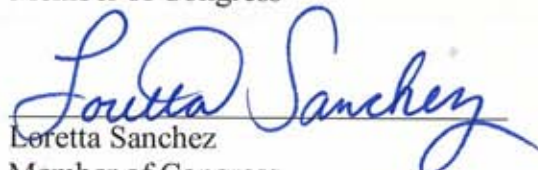

Lucille Roybal-Allard
Member of Congress

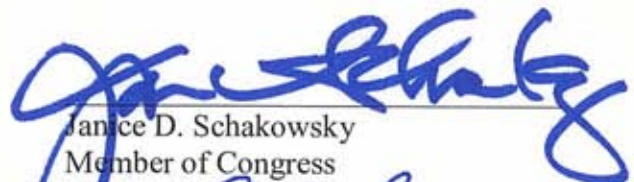

Bobby L. Rush
Member of Congress



Tim Ryan
Member of Congress


Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan
Member of Congress

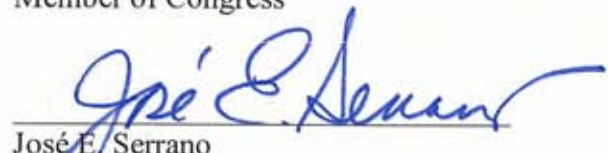

Linda T. Sánchez
Member of Congress


Loretta Sanchez
Member of Congress

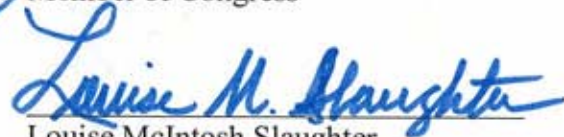

Janice D. Schakowsky
Member of Congress


Adam B. Schiff
Member of Congress


Robert C. Scott
Member of Congress

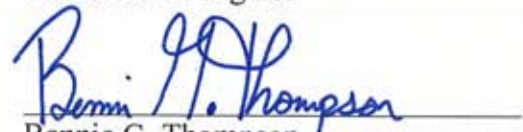

José E. Serrano
Member of Congress


Albio Sires
Member of Congress

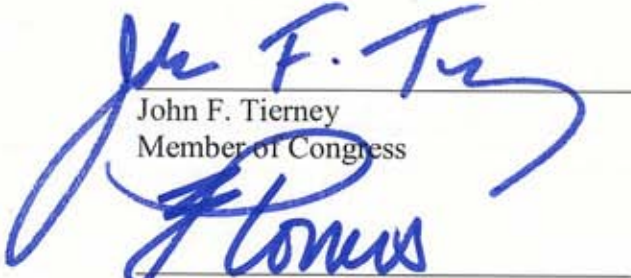

Louise McIntosh Slaughter
Member of Congress

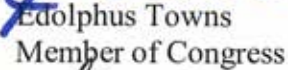

Jackie Speier
Member of Congress

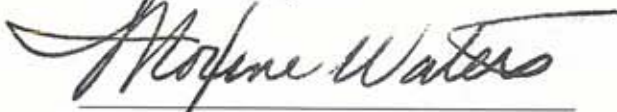

Fortney Pete Stark
Member of Congress



Bennie G. Thompson
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Mike Thompson
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John F. Tierney
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Edolphus Towns
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Maxine Waters
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Peter Welch
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